

# Women's Concerns Report

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## CWC Turns 20

Writing this cover article from the MCC center in Dhaka, Bangladesh, is a privilege. Through MCC projects here, women create their own paper, then use it to produce note cards. They make furniture from water hyacinth and are beginning to raise vegetables for sale. Bangla women have shared with me their materials on leadership training, including content for group Bible study leaders.

These activities reflect one segment of MCC women's programs. Another component for the past 20 years has been the Committee on Women's Concerns (CWC), formerly the Peace Section Task Force (TF) on Women in the Church and Society. This issue of *Report* celebrates the 20th anniversary of this committee and of *Women's Concerns Report*.

Twenty years ago, at a 1973 meeting in Ottawa, the MCC Peace Section acted to create a Task Force for women. This

event stands out in my memory. We—Luann Habegger (Martin), Ferne Umble, Lora Oyer, Ruth Stoltzfus (Yost), Ted Koontz (MCC staff), and I—had little idea then what all would transpire for the task force. Whether it will exist in 2013 is equally difficult to imagine. It will continue to change. While over 50 women have served as TF or CWC members, many others have offered ideas, written articles for *Report* and influenced how Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches experience women.

This issue primarily looks back. It also invites readers to think ahead. In addition to articles telling why we pay attention to both the past and the reality of change, there are also details of "what has happened." There are personal stories and reflections from General Conference, Mennonite Church, and Brethren in Christ women. Former *Report* editors reminisce.

During the early '70s there was growing awareness that women and men often relate in unjust ways. In fact, that primary relational pattern caused injustice in contexts of church committees, the work place, between races and across national boundaries. It was imperative to have a distinct program to focus the emerging issues.

Change followed. A sense of network has come into being. Many women have shared in tasks of decision making. Useful materials have been published. More women have pursued seminary training and served as pastors or on church boards. In-house MCC procedures have been addressed. People attended conferences—to listen and speak, to plan and renew.

What the TF/CWC set into motion, other groups have expanded. Women in Ministry conferences, Mennonite Conciliation Service, domestic violence committees, adult studies programs, Brethren Mennonite Council for Gay and Lesbian Concerns, and the seminaries have all planned important events.

As the task force took shape, Canadian women joined the U.S. members. Before long a Brethren in Christ representative joined. Then at the final binational meeting at Hesston, Kan., in 1991, the decision emerged for Canada and the United States to have separate committees.

Along the way, staff assistance has varied. Initially TF members worked from their homes through correspondence, each taking certain tasks. Then for a while an MCC Akron voluntary service staff person served the group. In 1982 the



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committee got its first half-time paid staff person. In 1984 MCC Canada hired its first half-time staff person. The budget reflects these shifts. In 1975 the budget was about \$840. By 1992 it totalled \$24,000 (US) and \$40,000 (Canada).

I want to introduce this historic issue through 20 summary observations. Much more could be said. Activities and vision for the third decade will take a shape of their own.

1. As was realized in 1973, there continues to be a need for an MCC CWC. Being binational and the most inter-Mennonite agency among us makes MCC more centralized for working at common issues.

2. Committee members have volunteered their time to meet and carry out tasks.

3. Members have been diverse. Founding members functioned with a zeal; some members since have doubted the need for such an organization. Some brought broad exposure to issues and tasks, while others depended on committee work to be the channel for their own learning. One woman who served claimed she had never known discrimination; most knew and named it easily.

4. Each meeting time served as an occasion to update members of feminist activities between meetings. Ideas gained through reading materials and newsletters from other women's organizations were shared.

5. Two women important to the TF have died. We honor them. Ferne Umble's original vision included concern for future generations. Active as the General Conference Women's Desk staff, Herta Funk implemented varied programs and published needed materials.

6. The binational character of the organization has been both an asset and a complication. Vision and awareness, plus hesitance or readiness to address male control patterns, have differed across national borders and among members themselves.

7. Leadership opportunities have been focused through CWC efforts. Concerns included placing women on church-wide committees (assisted by the task force's Resource Listing of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ women) or in pastoral positions and truly altering styles through a more radical approach to leading.

8. The TF or CWC has during the years given time and attention—more than has been publicly told—to relationships

within MCC structure. It has affected content of MCC orientation sessions, employment practice, and personnel satisfaction—at Akron and in overseas settings.

9. The TF was more direct in its first decade in addressing agenda for women in other Mennonite organizations. Correspondence from members probed Mennonite college and seminary practices. It confronted stereotypes whether in Mennonite Broadcasts, in an *M.B. Herald* editorial, or in MDS work. Further, it prodded MWC to involve international women more, to "permit" women to determine their activities.

10. With over 100 issues of *Report* printed during 20 years, the purpose of networking has been served. Many Mennonite and Brethren in Christ writers have given voice to experience and insight. Topics of relationship, sexuality, church/mission, and global and local agenda have recurred. As circulation grew, an editor observed how more "middle ground feminist" the newsletter had become.

11. The goal of being an authentic *forum* has rarely evolved through *Report*. Few critiques are made of content; little exchange between writers occurs. Whereas breadth on themes is more possible than with WM/WMSC publications, depth on content is not possible. Personal experience, rather than rigor of probing insight or analysis, has followed.

12. To provide an outlet for women, printed materials in addition to the *Report* have been an important role of the TF/CWC: "Persons Becoming," a packet of 25 articles that I edited; a monograph on "Women in Development" written by Luann Habegger (Martin); *Which Way Women?*, a 150-page book of essays by women, which I edited; three abuse packets, "Purple Packet" (wife abuse), "Broken Boundaries" (child sexual abuse), and "Crossing the Boundary" (professional/pastoral abuse); *Born Giving Birth: Creative Expressions of Mennonite Women*, 1991, a book edited by Mary Schertz and Phyllis Martens.

13. In 1975, \$100 of the budget went toward Luann Habegger's travel to the International Women's Year Tribune meeting in Mexico City, where she and Herta Funk heard and interacted with many international women. Bertha Beachy represented the organization in Nairobi at the 1981 MWC General Council Meeting. Fourteen international women attended the Wichita MWC meeting, thanks to funding generated by the TF plus WM and WMSC. Hopefully, CWC will enlarge its current efforts to involve Mennonite/BIC women in International Women's Day (March 8) activities



plus worship and other events that join with sisters worldwide during the Decade ('88-98) of Churches in Solidarity with Women.

14. How the CWC intersects with conference women's organizations (WM, WMSC) has surfaced at times during the 20 years. More clarity of difference between agenda and audience was needed when the MCC organization came to have its own "desk" a decade ago. The TF/CWC has been both less visible and more independent.

15. Target groups of populations of CWC have included these: professional women, women not part of conference groups, those interested in specific feminist issues, women personnel within MCC, women on the fringes of Mennonite/BIC churches and conference structures, plus women within MCC constituency who either need support or to be made aware of feminist concerns.

16. There are frequent references in minutes over the years to Mennonite women on the "fringe." While the TF/CWC has likely prompted some women restless with the slow pace of needed change in church circles, the organization has also not been adequately "radical" for some women who have experienced no option but to leave Mennonite groups.

17. Change has indeed occurred during 20 years. "How to think strategically about concrete suggestions for change is a difficult and important task," wrote Gayle Gerber Koontz, at one time the *Report* editor. More attention to cross-cultural learning among North American Mennonite/BIC women will

be important. Discussions have recurred about involving women of color more. The goal is to attend to needs/problems/strengths within local neighborhoods as well as global locations.

18. There is a noticeable shift from the diverse dimensions of early work to a more limiting focus on violence/abuse during the past three years. If this trend is to continue, then I believe Mennonite women will need to think of an alternate organization through which to implement broader interests and concerns.

19. CWC has created a list of 33 ideas for celebrating the 20th anniversary of the TF/CWC during September 1993. Hopefully, women in different communities will gather for creative occasions—to reminisce as well as to re-vision.

20. More work remains for CWC efforts with peacemaking. Mennonite/BIC women could be much better informed of government policy on issues related directly to women. We need to be much more politically literate when discussing and affecting issues for women in two-thirds of our world. Since *peace* refers to total well-being, to bring it about goes far beyond the absence of conflict or eliminating domestic abuse. Hopefully, CWC will expand, rather than narrow, its scope of peacemaking.

**Dorothy Yoder Nyce, author of books and articles, teaches part time at Goshen (Ind.) College. A social activist within Mennonite circles, she is also committed to global concerns/endeavors for women. She has lived overseas and spent the first half of 1993 in India.**

by Lois Barrett

## Paying Attention to Women's History

Paying attention to women's history requires being intentional. History formerly meant political history—from which women were usually excluded. Or history consisted of biographies of great men. Only gradually have we come to awareness that history is also social history and communal history, the story of communities of people, the stories of the people without political or official power, the story of trends and influences.

Gathering such data requires going beyond the usual sources of minutes and individual biographies. Social history is history from the bottom, the history of ordinary people in their environment rather than the history of political movers and shakers. Social history uses new sources: census data, wills, diaries of ordinary people, or in the case of 16th century Anabaptists—trial records and letters, or marriage and divorce records.

For example, from Strasbourg in the early 16th century one can use information provided by Anabaptist trials to piece together a picture of the shape of the different Anabaptist groups in Strasbourg. Where did these congregations meet? What were the occupations of their members? How did women answer their accusers when arrested? To what extent were women mentioned as leaders in congregations? What percentage of those arrested were women? Thus we could recreate not biographies of individual women, but a picture of Anabaptist women collectively—or at least women in a particular Anabaptist group.

In writing the history of the MCC Task Force on Women's Concerns, I suspect we will not be writing only biographies of great women, but looking at the social context and looking at the communities of people involved in the process. The task force would not have been formed without the group of women who organized the first ad hoc meeting just after a Peace Assembly in Chicago, or those who first took the concern to MCC Peace Section, or those who were members of the first task force. Beyond even those factors was a social climate friendlier to women's leadership, some congregations that were open to women's broader use of their gifts, and women who were ready to work for change in the church rather than leave the church.



My questions of the past are colored by my own experience and my selective memory of it. I remember those who had faith in me and my ability to serve the church even when I was unsure of myself. I remember sitting in a pastors' meeting where men remembered their licensing and ordination interviews as "just a formality," the outcome of which was never in doubt. But women present recalled their licensing and ordination interviews as anxiety-producing, full of questions men would never have been asked. I remember women's discussions where there were striking differences of opinion on means and ends and women's discussions where we felt like kindred spirits.

How does one write that kind of history? Such history is obviously never finished. No history includes all the possible facts; it is always a selection from the available data. The important historical task is to ask the right questions. History is the present asking its questions of the past. So we ask our questions now about the past 20 years. In another 20 years, we will have different questions. Yet, to remember is important; without memory we will not be able to answer our questions now or in the future. We look for memory, not nostalgia. We look for memory that connects us with our past, that gets us beyond thinking that we are unique, that helps us understand the present, and that pushes to the future and to the changes that we have yet to see.

**Lois Barrett** is executive secretary of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan. From 1983 to 1992 she was a pastor in the Mennonite Church of the Servant, Wichita. She has received a Ph.D. in historical theology from Union Graduate School in Cincinnati, Ohio, and an M.Div. from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind.

by Emily Will

## Remembering

*The writer, former CWC staff person, contacted others who have served in that role. In this article she weaves some of her own memories with those of other former staff.*

Of the dozen people who have served, formally or informally, as staff of the MCC Women's Task Force or Committee on Women's Concerns, I am the only one of non-ethnic Mennonite background, the one who stumbled into a thorny thicket of theology and tradition!

As a new staff person, I had not yet met any of the CWC members when some administrators referred to the CWC in terms that made me wonder about this group that I had agreed to represent. So what a delightful surprise it was to meet the seven women who then constituted the CWC. They were supportive, warm, rational, talented and gentle.

In preparing this article, I realized how other former staff also valued the vital role of CWC members. "I don't miss the job at all, but I long for a group like the CWC. It is matchless," says Christine Wenger Nofsinger, staff person in Akron from 1988 to 1990. CWC members offer patient and visionary support. "They did not fear to look ahead to tackle touchy issues."

One intent of the early vision was to function as a binational committee until each part was stable on its own. "To be among the first Canadian members of the binational Women's Task Force in 1974 was exciting," recalls Margaret Loewen Reimer. "I soon realized that Canadian women would need to establish a separate structure if they wanted to deal with their issues in their way. That gradually happened. But Canadian women have their U.S. sisters to thank for prodding them to get going!" she adds.

In addition to CWC members, staff knew support from many other women. "As I traveled and talked and met with women, I identified with their pain, which was much greater than I could have imagined," recalls Peggy Regehr, Winnipeg-based staff person from 1985 to 1989. "But I was impressed with their strength. That interaction kept me going through very, very difficult times in the position."

Tina Mast Burnett, staff person in Akron from January 1991 to the present, writes, "When I started with Women's Concerns, I knew the task for my term would be to work at domestic violence and sexual abuse. So I expected pain and anger, and they have been real. But I didn't realize the extent to which learning to know women working at this issue would bring me joy. I must be meeting the best and strongest women in the church. These are people with their eyes wide open to the reality of violence against women, but in the midst of that reality, they have shared gifts of faith, hope, strength and healing plus considerable laughter," Burnett says.

From its outset, the modest newsletter *Report* has been a vital sharing tool for North American Mennonite women. "What a joy to watch *Report* grow and develop over the years," writes Muriel Thiessen Stackley. "My invitation to edit it (1979 to 1982) came at a crucial time. I had just moved from the Mennonite nest and wondered if I could still contribute to it. For me, the committee decided to pay the handsome wage of \$25 per issue."

For Kathy Shantz, Ontario-based staff person since 1989, a "Women Doing Theology" conference at Conrad Grebel College in May 1992 proved the value of her efforts. "That convinced me of the rightness of MCC's involvement in women's concerns," Shantz says.

"Too often as women work for change in the church, we are isolated, lonely voices," she continues. "Sometimes outright hostility to our vision of equality for women with men



**"We aren't alone and we can trust our inner voices, voices that dare to utter 'God.'"**

silences us or forces us to go underground. But at this conference there was safety. We aren't alone and we can trust our inner voices, voices that dare to utter 'God.'"

When sharing highlights as Women's Concerns staff, few women mentioned strong anger. Although anger drives us to work for change, we can also fear our anger that accompanies unexpected obstacles. "Many administrators seemed to be supportive, seemed to understand the issues. Some placed roadblocks along the way, especially when organizational changes would have eased experience for women in MCC Canada," Regehr says.

Linda Schmidt, Akron-based staff from 1977 to 1979 and from 1982 to 1984, expressed her sentiments in verse:

Dust ruffles fly in Executive stew  
Mary Kay lip service will not do.  
Longing to hear that other point of view...  
"Sister, let me be your servant, too."

"Whenever I hear the song, 'Rise Up, O Men of God,' I think of the MCC Peace Section meeting in Ottawa 20 years ago when the Task Force on Women in Church and Society was formed," relates Luann Habegger Martin. "At that meeting I showed a short film, 'Included Out?' which illustrated how church language excludes women. The film assured viewers that rewriting hymns would not lead to removing separate restrooms for men and women, as some feared."

"Shortly thereafter, when I was in the women's restroom, a male Peace Section member mistakenly walked in. At that moment, the line 'bring in the day of brotherhood' from the song took on new meaning!" Habegger Martin recalls.

Sue Clemmer Steiner can also recall with humor the "fuss over the Rembrandt." MCC administrators censored the November-December 1984 issue of *Report* on body image that Christine Derstine compiled and Sue edited. The issue, already printed but not yet mailed, contained a reproduction of a nude sketch—Rembrandt's "Old Woman Bathing Her Feet." To agree on the matter took two meetings—one in Akron and a second in Leamington, Ont. Steiner and Derstine compromised; the nude would be replaced with a statement about what had transpired and why.

Women's Concerns staff recognize the progress made over two decades. Ted Koontz, while celebrating progress on women's issues since 1972, feels "sadness for the doors which remain closed." Koontz was a Peace Section administrative assistant in 1972 and did some of the first staff work for the newborn Task Force.



Recently, an MCC personnel administrator expressed frustration that women do not apply for high-level MCC positions. The women's main struggle is to balance a demanding job with home and family tasks. As Linda Schmidt murmurs:

Skirt from ironing to executive board  
Women's work is never done. Why, Lord?  
Out of the woodwork, men's issues emerge  
Will sexism e'er sing its funeral dirge?

Nevertheless, we believe that the next 20 years hold even further promise.

**Emily Will served as CWC staff person from 1984-1988. She and her family served with MCC in Mexico and Jamaica. She is now staff writer with MCC Information Services.**

## Through the Years

**1972**

Women hold caucus following the November Peace Section Assembly in Chicago.

**1973**

MCC Peace Section responds to a group presentation at its March meeting in Ottawa with the creation of a Task Force on Women in Church and Society.

First issue of the Task Force newsletter *Report* (Luann Habegger, editor) is distributed (500 copies). The goal is to promote networking, be a forum and cover topics of current interest.

Two hundred women and men attend the November Peace Section Assembly on "The Interdependence of Men and Women." Around 50 women serve as discussion leaders or speakers.

**1974**

Task Force produces *Persons Becoming*, edited by Dorothy Yoder Nyce, a packet of 25 articles that goes into four printings and sells 1,800 copies.

More than 50 women participate in the two-day

"Seminar on the Family," organized by the Task Force and the Peace Section Washington Office (Luann Habegger, coordinator). Purposes included education on government operations, effects of political decisions, rights of children, etc.

Task Force becomes binational with three Canadian and three U.S. members.

In response to a Task Force study of women in church vocations, MCC appoints an advisory group to review the recruitment and assignment of women in MCC programs. Twelve recommendations emerged.

Task Force sends representative Luann Habegger to the nongovernmental meeting of the World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico City.

**1976**

Through the initiatives of the Task Force, MCC publishes *Women and Development* by Luann Habegger, as part of its development monograph series.

**1978**

Task Force raises \$10,000, matched by Mennonite World Conference Planning Committee, for 14 women

from developing countries to attend MWC in Kansas, and sponsors a women's dinner and luncheon at the conference, with over 500 attending.

*Resource Listing of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Women* is published. It includes 80 names; a supplement of 40 additional names is published two years later. Listing is revised in 1982, again in 1985 with 200 listings, and a final time in 1988 with double that many listings.

**1980**

Publication of *Which Way Women?*, a 150-page book edited by Dorothy Yoder Nyce, with over 40 contributors on the International Women's Year themes of equality, peace and development; 1,500 sold.

**1982**

Peace Section appoints half-time staff person for women's concerns, based in Akron; name changed to Committee on Women's Concerns.

**1984**

MCC Canada hires first half-time Canadian staff person for women's concerns.

**1985**

MCC Domestic Violence Task Force formed by MCC U.S. Office of Criminal Justice and Canada's Victim-Offender Ministries programs. CWC is represented on task force.

**1986**

After continuing evaluation, MCC and the CWC approve a statement on "Committee of Women's Concerns Mandate." That statement continues as the official mandate of CWC.

**1987**

Publication of *Purple Packet*, on wife abuse. This is MCC's first abuse packet; 9,500 packets printed to date.

**1988**

A Canadian CWC is organized, with links to the provincial MCCs. Agreed that the Canadian committee will meet yearly and three members from the Canadian CWC will serve on the binational CWC.

**1989**

Publication of *Broken Boundaries* packet on child sexual abuse. 7,000 printed to date.

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#### **1990**

"Shedding Light in Darkness," MCC's first conference on family violence, held in Upland, Calif. Establishment of a Network of Adult Survivors of Abuse follows that conference.

#### **1991**

CWC agrees to phase out the binational committee, partly because of the expense of travel to binational meetings. The U.S. and Canadian committees continue to meet, and the two half-time staff people (one in Canada and one in the United States) are the link between the two national committees.

The MCC Domestic Violence Task Force is phased out, and Women's Concerns (U.S. and

Canada) agrees to make domestic violence and sexual abuse a priority agenda for the present.

CWC and Mennonite Conciliation Services together publish *Crossing the Boundary: Sexual Abuse by Professionals* packet; 6,000 printed to date.

Publication of *Born Giving Birth: Creative Expressions of Mennonite Women*, a CWC-initiated book featuring writing and art, edited by Mary H. Schertz and Phyllis Martens, published by Faith and Life Press.

#### **1992**

"In a Mennonite Voice: Women Doing Theology" conference held at Conrad Grebel College. About 200 attend.

by Luann Habegger Martin

## **In the Beginning...**

The '70s are often referred to as the "Decade of Women." And what a decade it was with changes affecting the work place, campus, gymnasium, home and church. To a group of Christian feminists who attended a women's caucus following the 1972 MCC Peace Section Assembly in Chicago, change was not happening fast enough in the Mennonite church. How, they asked, could a church concerned about issues of peace and justice deny women full participation because of their gender?

One year earlier, the Peace Section had invited women's organizations of constituent conferences to send representatives to serve on the Peace Section. Lora Oyer and Ferne Umble, representatives of the General Conference and Mennonite Church women's organizations, decided to bring the concerns expressed at the caucus to the attention of the Peace Section.

At the March 1973 Peace Section meeting in Ottawa, Lora and Fern spoke for conference women's groups. Dorothy Yoder Nyce, Ferne's replacement to the Peace Section, read her paper, "Women in God's Plan and Man's World." Luann Habegger, staff member in MCC's Washington Peace Section Office, reported on the women's caucus.

Their presentation resulted in the following action, moved by John Lapp and seconded by Lee Roy Berry: "The Peace Section accepts the challenge to place women's interests on its continuing agenda and supports bringing these concerns to the attention of the church via a variety of forms and offers its resources for such. The Peace Section appoints a subcommittee of women members of the Section along with Luann Habegger and with Ted Koontz as staff persons to pursue the suggested goals." The motion carried.

Five months later the subcommittee, called the Task Force on Women in the Church and Society, issued its first *Report* which included a discussion of Christian feminism. The purpose of the newsletter was to provide a forum for sharing concerns, ideas, and resource materials and to publicize and affirm efforts being made by women to create a more inclusive church. Readers were told in the first issue that

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"by uniting together and sharing information, we can better coordinate efforts to bring about the emergence of a new consciousness in our churches."

Early readers of the newsletter included skeptical church officials as well as women who considered themselves exiles from the institutional church. In addition to feature articles and current developments, the first issues of the newsletter reported on the number of women in decision-making positions at MCC and Mennonite institutions.

When one considers that Task Force members volunteered their time, met only twice a year, operated on a meager budget, and held different perspectives on feminism, then the list of accomplishments in those first years is impressive. Fifteen months after its creation, the Task Force had published a packet (*Persons Becoming*) of 25 articles and sponsored a seminar on the family with a congresswoman, feminist theologian, and a leading child rights advocate as resource speakers. Except for the lodging costs (\$5/night!),

that seminar could be held today. The topics are as relevant (and controversial) as they were 20 years ago.

Recently I felt frustrated after attending a Sunday school class on feminist theology. Nothing new, I thought to myself. At times when I feel we should be farther along after 20 years, I am reminded of Gloria Steinem's observation that progress is not always linear. "Massive change proceeds more as a spiral than a straight line. We repeat similar patterns over and over again, each time in a slightly different circumstance, so experiences that appear to be circular and discouraging in the short run may turn out to be moving in a clear direction in the long run."

**Luann Habegger Martin edited the first eight issues of the *Report* and served on the Task Force from 1973-76. She spent most of the past 15 years abroad, living in one Asian and three African countries. She now works in Washington, D.C. at the Center to Prevent Childhood Malnutrition. Luann is the mother of two children, ages 10 and 13.**

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by Muriel Thiessen Stackley

## The *Report*: Helping Us "Rethink"

"I just didn't get it," said Oregon's Senator Robert Packwood last December when he was called to account for sexual misconduct. "But now I do. I will revamp my attitude."

I have a hunch that in the 20-year history of *Report*, many men among us have found themselves thinking something like this. And the revamping continues. What astonishes me is the number of women who are also confronted with the necessity to rethink women's issues.

Women's Concerns *Report* has brought a regular dose of medicine to the blind spots, often well-intentioned, of our patriarchal society. It has offered a forum for and about women. It has, I believe, been a catalyst in Mennonite and Brethren in Christ circles. It has broadened our awareness, helped define our theology, educated us, offered practical information, described relationships, evoked tears of empathy, enlivened our language, defined our careers, and affirmed the leadership of women—all this by telling women's stories, by providing space for them to tell their own stories. We as a body of believers are different 20 years later, and *Report* has had something to do with this.

But this modest little periodical of a committee, meticulously constructed for denominational balance, has a lot of work yet to do. Print that comes my way still includes phrases like "witch-hunt against Catholic feminists." Female seminary graduates are often not invited by our congregations, or women pastors looking for a second or third appointment are too frequently turned down. And sometimes I think I cannot bear yet another disclosure of sexual misconduct and power abuse.

We have much to tell each other about sexuality. Friendship, especially in the context of our congregations, will help. Articulation of this in future issues of *Report* will help. Adding a friend's name to the mailing list will help. Continuing to check our thinking with Scriptures freed of male bias will help.



What keeps me going is the gospel record of the words and acts of Jesus Christ: he freely touched a menstruating woman (breaking all the social rules of his time); he let a woman best him in an argument (about who should get "the crumbs from the table"); he first told a woman that he was "the resurrection and the life." He told women (who were not considered reliable witnesses in any court) to tell the male disciples the most important news in history—that he was alive.

Jesus brings profound change. Telling that is one of *Report's* reasons for being. May it continue to be.

**Muriel Thiessen Stackley** is coordinator of Newton (Kan.) Area Peace Center. She was editor of *Women's Concerns Report* from 1980-1983, was editor of *The Mennonite*, and was founding editor of the Women in Mission newsletter, *Window to Mission*.

**"The dreams of that generation of women were stillborn. More than a few of those women died, in body and/or in spirit, worn out from the struggle of giving birth."**

by Sue C. Steiner

## Keeping the Dream Alive

My maternal grandmother died in 1916, when my mother was ten. The few family stories that circulated about Maggie intrigued me immensely. Apparently, Maggie taught Sunday School to adults and wrote poetry for church papers. When the chorister in her rural Franconia Conference (Pa.) congregation couldn't get the pitch, he looked to Maggie for help.

Last weekend, I finally met Maggie and her female friends. I began to read a cache of newly-found letters dated 1897-1901. Those letters introduced me to Maggie as a talented and enthusiastic young adult Mennonite woman, with "contacts" in the Scottsdale-Bluffton axis. She was invited to give essays at Bible conferences. She traveled to Scottsdale, sang in a quartet, and worked for short periods at a city mission.

Maggie knew some of the "famous" traveling preachers of the day and encouraged them to visit the Franconia churches. She and her female friends were excited about the renewal they saw in the church. New things were being born, and Maggie was there in the midst of it—eager, energized, full of dreams, ministering in ways that were new for women.

In 1901, Maggie came back home and married my grandfather. Over the next 15 years she gave birth to five children. The fourth one was stillborn. The fifth one was born and died on the same day. Five days later, Magdaline Moyer Derstine herself died.

Maggie's life and death is a metaphor for me of what happened to a whole generation of energetic Mennonite women who came of age around the turn of the last century. They cared deeply about the church. They had a lot to offer. But something happened. And it wasn't just that they "settled down," married, and birthed babies.

Yes, some kept on writing poetry for church papers; some kept on teaching adults in Sunday School; maybe a few even gave the pitch surreptitiously in rural congregations when the male chorister couldn't get it. But something had happened. The dreams of that generation of women were stillborn. More than a few of those women died, in body and/or in spirit, worn out from the struggle of giving birth. For in most places



in the church, the "new ways" of women ministering were forcibly overtaken by the older, less threatening ways.

Often I wonder about the generation of women who are set to come of age at the turn of the next century. Will their dreams of full participation in the church be stillborn? Will they die from the struggle of giving birth? Undoubtedly some will. Some always do. And such stillbirths, such deaths, will continue to produce unimaginable anger and pain, some of it turned inward, some of it turned outward.

But for me there are signs of hope. One of the biggest came on November 1, 1992, when I preached at the ordination of Ruth Boehm at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. Ruth

**"We are more than a one-generation aberration...more than a blip on the screen. We are here to stay! We will continue to use our gifts of ministry alongside those of men in all ways so that new things can continually be born amongst us."**

Boehm is a second generation, late-20th century Mennonite woman in ministry. That is to say, she is a woman in ministry mentored by another woman in ministry—namely me. When I began as youth minister for Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec in 1982, Ruth was a teenager on the conference youth committee. When I began as associate pastor of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church in 1987, Ruth was a young adult in the congregation. Even while my own dreams were fragile, even while I myself struggled to not die giving birth, I embodied new possibilities for Ruth and others.

Ruth's ordination gives me the courage to say, "We are more than a one-generation aberration...more than a blip on the screen. We are here to stay! We will continue to use our gifts of ministry alongside those of men in all ways so that new things can continually be born amongst us." Amen. So be it!

**Sue C. Steiner is co-pastor (with Harold Schlegel) of St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church. She edited the Women's Concerns Newsletter 1973-74 and 1983-85. She was one of the organizers of the Women in Pastoral Ministry Conference held at Conrad Grebel College April in 1993.**

by Dorothy Nickel Friesen

## Backing Through Doors

While the proverbial choice of tantalizing doors is a familiar metaphor for opportunity, my own life seems to be more one of backing through doors rather than moving toward them.

**Door #1:** Being twenty-something, I entered the world of academia with a sense of idealism and passion. Having finished college and two years of voluntary service, I was ready to tackle the great theological questions of life. Instead, the theological questions tackled me. During my first seminary stint, the great questions of faith, commitment and discipleship were made relevant to daily life. However, my gender seemed a critical factor in theological debates as well. My studying, advocacy, and personal reading culminated in being at the right place at the right time. I backed through the door of role of women in Mennonite leadership and found myself one of the first through the door! Vehicles such as Women in Ministry conferences, symposiums on women in leadership and inclusive language, MCC's task force and its newsletter were all significant factors in my personal growth and development.

**Door #2:** But that door also seemed to shut just as abruptly. As I was uncovering my theological bent, wise professors were encouraging me to return to the classroom in the secular world. "We need good teachers in the public schools, too." And we did! So the next door of opportunity emerged in the secular field. I was a teacher of street kids, poor kids, violent kids. I thrived on the emergency-room nature of nontraditional education in the inner city. I worked part time, parented part time, and saw my life as one of ministry and giving. My gender, at that point, seemed well suited to the multiplicity of the tasks I was asked to do.

The significant development of the role of women in leadership, whether in the public or church arena, was growing by leaps and bounds. I backed into the door of opportunity once again. My local congregation, while accepting and affirming my gifts, also began to prod me about more formal church leadership.

**Door #3:** Now thirty-something, I again entered seminary. I felt quite at home and so I backed through another door of opportunity and discovered affirmation and encouragement along the path of church leadership.



**"We can never underestimate  
the power of the connected  
word and the power of the  
INCARNATE WORD."**

It was intense. I was encouraged (and sometimes enraged) by Mennonite conferences and seminars which continued to draw together women and men of faith who were interested in church leadership. Daily dipping into the realm of books and articles which were exploring the need for leadership in all church settings was refreshing. Networking became a code word for life. It was very important to meet friends and have support systems that kept the spirit buoyed through the storms of raging debates both in church discussions and press. Was God, in fact, calling me to church leadership? Secretly, I hoped that another high school English teaching position would open up to draw me back to the classroom where I felt comfortable, needed and skilled. Church leadership frightened me. I had no experience; I was rather nontraditional. My piety was informed by feminism.

*Door #4:* And then came a call. I backed through another door and found a small but thriving congregation in a nontraditional setting that seemed to ask for and accept me and my leadership. I was at the right place at the right time again. Somehow, the university/church setting was the perfect mix for this former school teacher and fledgling pastor. I had expected only closed doors (because I knew the statistics of women who were failing to find opportunities to serve). I had more than a slightly ajar door to open. What sustained me were friendships with women who encouraged me to "keep on keepin' on." Loneliness seemed a daily partner. But backing through the door of pastoral leadership was a good choice.

*Door #5:* Now forty-something, my life seemed organized around a congregational context. A new door emerged. What about administration? And so I backed through another door. I never intended to become a "bureaucrat." I never intended to offer seminary leadership. But here I am. Just how do women fit into this picture, I ask anew.

The work of the task force through its collective voice of the *Report* prodded women to take the challenge of leadership. We can never underestimate the power of the connected word and the power of the INCARNATE WORD.

*Door #6:* Which door shall we back through next?

**Following tasks of teaching, editing, and serving as pastor,  
Dorothy is currently the assistant dean at Associated Mennonite  
Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. She is a member of the  
planning committee for "Mennonite Voices in Dialogue: Women  
Doing Theology," a conference to be in June 1994 in Bluffton,  
Ohio.**

by Harriet Sider Bicksler

## No Official Impediments

Three years ago I helped plan a first-ever Brethren in Christ retreat focused on women in ministry and leadership. Its goals were two-fold: to support and encourage women already in church ministry and to examine biblical interpretation issues that block many from accepting women in ministry.

A few weeks before the retreat, a pastor asked about attending. He then criticized the committee's biased planning and choice of keynote speaker. He strongly implied that because I was not seminary-trained, I was naive about feminist theology. Better trained, he was equipped to comprehend such speaker's interpreting techniques.

That incident was symbolic of how women leaders are often treated in the church. The man's implication that I was naive and inadequately educated annoyed me. Never mind that I was intelligent, had a master's degree, have read fairly extensively in women's issues, and held a responsible denominational position. My impression was that he felt free to be condescending because I was a woman.

Fortunately, change and progress in the Brethren in Christ church have been significant. Twenty years ago when I attended my first General Conference as a voting member, I was one of only a few women delegates. (Most of us were members of the Women's Missionary Prayer Circle Committee!) By 1992, women comprised a significant percentage of the voting membership.

Officially, women can aspire to and be credentialed for any position in the Brethren in Christ Church, in theory even bishop or moderator. In 1982, General Conference passed a resolution to support using women's gifts in the church. The resolution was reaffirmed almost unanimously, with very little negative comment, this past July. Only a few years ago a lot of hurtful things had been expressed about women in ministry.

Women are being licensed to the ministry. Within the past six months, the number of ordained women more than doubled (from two to five!). Women serve on all denominational boards except Stewardship, on regional conference boards, on

**"I remain grateful for the support of women and men—in my church and the broader Anabaptist community represented by *Report*—who work hard to ensure that all God-given gifts are utilized in kingdom work."**

boards except Stewardship, on regional conference boards, on pastoral teams, and as deacons and board members in many local congregations. Many men and women, including some who in theory or theology remain opposed, are personally kind to and supportive of women in ministry.

But official policy does not always tell the whole story. Many unofficial impediments exist. These include: congregations and individuals unwilling to consider a female pastoral candidate; little active encouragement of women with ministry skills; a strong residue of conservative opinion which resists changing traditional understandings of roles; confusion over biblical interpretation issues (especially regarding submission and authority); few women theologians to help set the agenda; a top, currently all-male administrative roster.

I recently joined a group of women in ministry to brainstorm about topics for articles in our denominational journal. The list is instructive. It reflects the breadth of issues needed for ongoing discussion: women in the workplace; female attributes of God; helping women claim giftedness; what "feminism" is and is not; spouse abuse; how women in ministry meet needs of women; how perceptions of women in ministry change; women as prophets; women as caregivers; men writing about women and vice versa; and the head covering (due to a minority move at the 1992 General Conference to insert it into our new doctrinal statement).

Much of the time I am optimistic about the future for women in my church. Sometimes I envy what appears to be greater "progress" in other Anabaptist groups; then I remember that we are "far ahead" of others. Sometimes what I observe and experience is discouraging—when a church leader claims there is no sexual abuse in the Brethren in Christ Church or when a gifted and experienced woman is refused opportunity to serve the church.

I remain grateful for the support of women and men—in my church and the broader Anabaptist community represented by *Report*—who work hard to ensure that all God-given gifts are utilized in kingdom work.

**Harriet Sider Bicksler served as co-director of the Board for Brotherhood concerns of the BIC Church from 1989-1992. She continues to edit *Shalom!*, a quarterly journal on social issues, and is a member-at-large of MCC U.S. Self-employed as an editor and writer, she has a contract with the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health.**



by Mary Anne Hildebrand

## **Women's Concerns: Acknowledging Oppression**

The Feminist and the Human Rights movements are responsible for naming issues of injustice for women globally. Over the past 20 years, religious feminists have succeeded in identifying issues within patriarchal society and religion that oppress. What voice do Mennonite women bring to this time of change for the church?

Through studies and in my work with various ecumenical women's groups, I am aware that many denominations are addressing women's issues through formal structures, with clear plans of action. This communicates three important messages: 1) acknowledgement of the need; 2) willingness to take responsibility; 3) imperative for a voice for women.

In 1988 the World Council of Churches announced the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. Many participating denominations already had politically active women's groups. The formal recognition by the church that women are an oppressed group has broken down the first barrier to hearing women's voices.

Mennonite churches have never been a part of the World Council of Churches. However, Mennonite women have a

**"Victims of abuse raise many issues for the church that apply to all women. Appropriate responses emerge slowly. To acknowledge that women are oppressed is not easily done among Mennonites."**

limited forum for expression of women's concerns through MCC Women's Concerns program. Within the Mennonite community, women have experienced limited voice. Although Women's Concerns has not revolutionized the organized church, it has made a difference for individuals. During the past 10 years many Mennonite (and other denomination) women have left the church. With their personal or faith struggles invalidated, they withdrew from and became invisible to the church. Many joined secular women's groups. MCC Women's Concerns Report functions to link women from Mennonite groups and provides a voice for concerns.

I believe that the issue of pastoral sexual abuse has forced church structures to begin to deal with power and gender imbalance. While domestic violence and sexual abuse have raised issues of dominance and control, pastoral sexual abuse has focused the concern. The time was ripe at last summer's meeting of the General Conference of Mennonites for the open discussion, initiated by men, of patriarchy as a structure that promotes abuse.

Victims of abuse raise many issues for the church that apply to all women. Appropriate responses emerge slowly. To acknowledge that women are oppressed is not easily done among Mennonites. Women's voices are heard only individually, if at all.

Unlike women in some denominations, Mennonite women have not been as politically involved. We need a group voice. We need to name the injustices that we and others experience within our own culture/faith; we need to affirm each other's strength as we work to liberate and support all who suffer. Together, we need to challenge the church. Organizing, whether it be for political action or for support, means to take responsibility. It will give us a sense of our power. It will enhance our identity as women and as Mennonite women.

**Mary Anne Hildebrand is a social worker, teacher, M.Div. student, and an advocate for victims of physical and sexual abuse. She is a member of Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, one of the founding members of Voices for Non-Violence (Man.), and a member of the Advisory Council for the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle, Wash.**

#### **Book Review:**

## **Learning About Sexual Abuse**

***Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches*, by Carolyn Holderread Heggen (Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa., 1993, 206 pages)**

This is the book we've been waiting for: concise, direct, redemptive, and—with Herald Press as publisher—close to home. Carolyn's experience as a therapist treating survivors of sexual abuse from Christian homes and churches, and as a pastoral elder in a Mennonite church, has given her a perspective that we need to hear.

Her book is an excellent starting place for congregations or groups wanting to study the issue. It defines clearly without being technically overwhelming. It has strong spirituality woven throughout, which makes it both harder to maintain denial about abuse's existence in churches, and gives hope. Its clarity about repentance and forgiveness as processes (rather than simple acts) will be helpful to both survivors and churches, and speaks clearly on helpful and harmful ways of responding.

Perhaps the most challenging chapter to read will be that on the perpetrator. While stating clearly and frequently that there is no justification for sexual abuse, her clear portrayals of the varieties of rationalizations offered by perpetrators force us to realize that abusers are not demonic fiends, but are brothers (and sisters) who sit with us in church.

**Reviewed by Mary Berkshire Stueben, pastor, Seattle (Wash.) Mennonite Church**

## MCC Committee on Women's Concerns

(Task Force on Women in Church and Society)

Members are listed in order of their appointment to the committee. In earlier years members were appointed as representatives of conference groups (Mennonite Church, General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ). Currently members of the U.S. committee represent conferences, and members of the Canadian committee represent MCC provincial committees.

Ruth Stoltzfus (Yost)	MC	Lori Matties	Man.
Lois Keeney	GC	Janette Engle Lewis	BIC
Lora Oyer	GC	Brenda Glanzer	GC
Dorothy Yoder Nyce	MC	Louella Cronkhite	Alta.
Luann Habegger (Martin)	MC	Ruth Rittgers	MC
Erna Klassen	MB	Frances Hiebert	MB
Sue Clemmer Steiner	MC	Mary Martin	Ont.
Margaret Loewen Reimer	GC	Vange Thiessen	BC
Katie Funk Wiebe	MB	Anneli Braul	Atla.
Emma LaRoque	MC	Joan Yoder	Sask.
Gayle Gerber Koontz	GC	Erica Block	Man.
Nancy S. Lapp	MC	Sonia Blanchette	Quebec
Mabel Paetkau	GC	Anne Chamberlain	BIC
Anna Mary Brubacher	MC	Betty Sommer	GC
Mary Dueck	MB	Sharon Irvin	MC
Anita Buller	MB		
Rosie Epp	GC		
Edith Krause	GC		
Elsa Redekop	MB		
Martha Smith Good	MC		
Bertha Beachy	MC		
Muriel Thiessen Stackley	Report Editor		
Esther Wiens	MC		
Karen Neufeld	MB		
Jan Lugibihl	GC		
Janice Kreider	GC		
Arlene Miller	BIC		
Joyce Rutt Eby	MC		
Chris Derstine	MC		
Sue Clemmer Steiner	Report Editor		
Joan Gerig	GC		
Irene L. Loewen	MB		
Mildred Dyck	MB		
Lydia Harder	Alta.		
Wanda Bryant	MC		
Esther Epp Tiessen	Ont.		
Leola Epp	Sask.		

## Upcoming Issues:

*Women's Concerns Report*

- Sep/Oct 1993 Step families
- Nov/Dec 1993 Latin American women's movements
- Jan/Feb 1994 Pastoral sexual misconduct
- Mar/Apr 1994 Single women
- May/Jun 1994 Women in pastoral ministry
- Jul/Aug 1994 Women in helping professions

## **Voices from Report Readers**

Earlier this year we sent a survey to 550 *Women's Concerns Report* readers, to rediscover who the readers are and what your interests are. Our thanks to everyone who completed and returned the survey! Following is a summary of what we learned. In following issues we will share some of your suggestions for future topics for *Report*.

Who reads this newsletter? Our readers are 86% female. Sixty-three percent are from the U.S., 34% from Canada; 3% from other countries. The majority of readers are from 31-60 years of age; 79% are married.

Most of you read every issue of *Report*; 61% of you share issues with at least one other person!

We listed 21 issues of concern to women and asked you to identify those issues you most want Women's Concerns to address. Your top four issues, in order of priority are:

- domestic violence
- women in church leadership
- theology and feminism
- [sexual] abuse

Following are a few of the many personal comments from the survey:

—...“[I rely on *Report*] for a sense of collegiality with other Anabaptist women on topics of mutual concern.”

—“Sometimes I do not fully agree with views presented. However, I appreciate the open candid frankness of the articles. Keep up the good work.”

—“I deal with few of these issues personally but I have daughters and I live in a society that needs to deal with all these issues.”

—“Don't avoid controversial subjects like abortion.”

—“It is important for me as a male to hear what women in the church are saying. I have appreciated getting the reports on women's concerns.”

—“I really enjoy the *Report*. The storytelling format speaks loud and clear to me—better than stats or analysis. It's an

excellent vehicle to get a variety of women talking among themselves. Don't change too much, and don't let it disappear.”

—“The magazine has been too focused on the negative part for my liking. That might need expressing, but I believe it should always then be supported by biblical backgrounds and reports on how people have been healed or helped and where to go for help.”

—“I have received Women's Concerns since it started. It is able to address issues in depth. We need to be able to voice difficult and ‘controversial’ issues which affect women but which may not receive a voice elsewhere.”

—“The strength of *Women's Report* is its global aspect and the variety of topics it covers relating to women.”

—“This is a periodical that *must* continue.”

—“Sometimes I do not fully agree with views presented. However, I appreciate the open candid frankness of the articles. Keep up the good work.”

—“I am rather indifferent to your magazine. It is not because it isn't good or relevant, but because these issues are not too relevant to my life at this time.”

—“I look forward to the arrival of the *Report* and though not every issue touches my personal experience, I am amazed at how often it does...and find tremendous support in those. Other issues which do not address me personally are nevertheless interesting and expand my consciousness in those areas.”

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## **Women's Concerns Report**

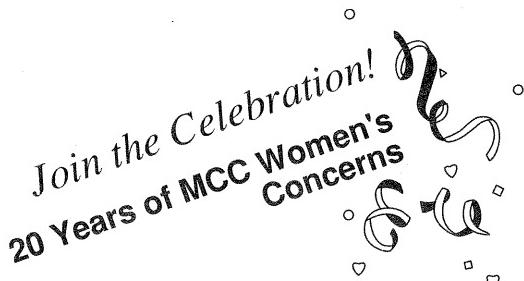
**Complete listing of past issues**

1. Aug 1973: Focus on role of women in the church.
2. Oct 1973: Focus on ordination and the minister's wife, the role of women in the Mennonite church.
3. Dec 1973: Restoring wholeness, the Martha-complex.
4. Feb 1974: Study groups on women, the status of widows in the church.
5. Apr 1974: On education.
6. Summer 1974: Women, work and the church.
7. Fall 1974: Perspectives on 1974: The implications of interdependence and cooperation.
8. Jan-May 1975: Women's representation on church committees; A single goes to Africa.
9. Oct-Dec 1975: How women fared at three official Mennonite conferences; Reports on task force projects and seminars on women's concerns.
10. Mar-Apr 1976: The "total woman" phenomenon; Experiences as women in the working world; the politics of rape.
11. Jul 1976: Worship.
12. Dec 1976: Parenthood and childbearing.
13. Feb 1977: Men.
14. May 1977: Media.
15. Jul 1977: Language.
16. Sep 1977: Rape.
17. Nov 1977: Third world women.
18. Feb 1978: The auxiliary syndrome.
19. Apr-May 1978: Women in ministry.
20. Jun-Jul 1978: Black women and the church.
21. Aug-Sep 1978: Women and careers.
22. Oct-Nov 1978: Women and world conference.
23. Dec 1978: Family violence, Pt. I.
24. Jan 1979: Family violence, Pt. II.
25. Mar-Apr 1979: Women and power.
26. Jul 1979: Native Americans
27. Aug 1979: New men, new roles.
28. Nov-Dec 1979: The child.
29. Jan-Feb 1980: Women in the speaking ministry of the church.
30. Mar-Apr 1980: Returned missionary women.
31. May-Jun 1980: Mennonite women and depression.
32. Jul-Aug 1980: Follow up focus on Native Americans: Canadians.
33. Sep-Oct 1980: Women in leadership.
34. Nov-Dec 1980: Women in Mennonite business/industry.
35. Jan-Feb 1981: Women and militarism.
36. Mar-Apr 1981: Mentoring for and by women.
37. May-Jun 1981: Ministry of writing.
38. Jul-Aug 1981: Minister's spouse.
39. Sep-Oct 1981: Discipleship motives in career choices.
40. Nov-Dec 1981: Focus on singleness and single parenting.
41. Jan-Feb 1982: Women and health.
42. Mar-Apr 1982: Language: Inclusiveness.
43. May-Jun 1982: Ordination.
44. Jul-Aug 1982: Sexuality and God's Kingdom.
45. Sep-Oct 1982: Peace and the power of one woman.
46. Nov-Dec 1982: Two-career marriages.
47. Jan-Feb 1983: Nurturing children; feminist roots—what nurtures their growth?

48. Mar-Apr 1983: Women mystics and the devotional life.
49. May-Jun 1983: Women and the Word: the interpretive intrigue.
50. Jul-Aug 1983: Ten-Year Celebration of CWC.
51. Sep-Oct 1983: Women's experiences in non-traditional Mennonite churches.
52. Nov-Dec 1983: Women and aging.
53. Jan-Feb 1984: Mennonite women and home mission.
54. Mar-Apr 1984: Third World women.
55. May-Jun 1984: Childbearing/childlessness.
56. Jul-Aug 1984: Friendship and community.
57. Sep-Oct 1984: Women and poverty.
58. Nov-Dec 1984: Women and body image.
59. Jan-Feb 1985: Black women and feminism.
60. Mar-Apr 1985: Women and the special child.
61. May-Jun 1985: Women's development: a critique of existing theory.
62. Jul-Aug 1985: Mothers and daughters.
63. Sep-Oct 1985: Women and decision-making in Mennonite institutions.
64. Jan-Feb 1986: Women, pornography and violence.
65. Mar-Apr 1986: Women, men and housework.
66. May-Jun 1986: Divorce and the church.
67. Jul-Aug 1986: Women, choice and lifestyle.
68. Sep-Oct 1986: Women Resisting Injustice.
69. Nov-Dec 1986: Women and Advertising.
70. Jan-Feb 1987: Sharing Our Stories (Social Roles and Sexuality).
71. Mar-Apr 1987: Women and Counseling.
72. May-Jun 1987: Asian Women Doing Theology.
73. Jul-Aug 1987: Widowhood.
74. Sep-Oct 1987: Wife Abuse.
75. Nov-Dec 1987: Mennonite Women Artists.
76. Jan-Feb 1988: Our God-talk: Images, Idols, Metaphors and Masks.
77. Mar-Apr 1988: Farm Women in Crisis.
78. May-Jun 1988: Palestinian Women.
79. Jul-Aug 1988: Women as Domestic Help.
80. Sep-Oct 1988: Women with Disabilities.
81. Nov-Dec 1988: Mennonite Women Leaders 'Round the World.
82. Jan-Feb 1989: Mennonite Women Leaders 'Round the World Part II.
83. Mar-Apr 1989: Incest.
84. May-Jun 1989: Shelter, Housing, Homelessness.
85. Jul-Aug 1989: Cancer.
86. Sep-Oct 1989: Sex Tourism and Prostitution.
87. Nov-Dec 1989: Women Around the World: What are their Options?
88. Jan-Feb 1990: Aging.
89. Mar-Apr 1990: Women: Bearing the Cross of Discipleship.
90. May-Jun 1990: Women of South Africa.
91. Jul-Aug 1990: Co-dependency.
92. Sep-Oct 1990: Women, Environment, and a Throw-Away Society.
93. Nov-Dec 1990: Motherhood, Careers and Spirituality.
94. Jan-Feb 1991: Mental Illness.
95. Mar-Apr 1991: Drugs and Alcohol.
96. May-Jun 1991: The Seduction of Materialism.
97. Jul-Aug 1991: Literacy.
98. Sep-Oct 1991: Shopping Cart Power.
99. Nov-Dec 1991: The Childbearing Years.
100. Jan-Feb 1992: Parenting in a Cross-Cultural Setting.
101. Mar-Apr 1992: Women and Healthy Sexuality.
102. May-Jun 1992: Women Struggling in the Church.
103. Jul-Aug 1992: Native Women.
104. Sep-Oct 1992: Women and the International Debt.
105. Nov-Dec 1992: Women Doing Theology: A Conference Report.
106. Jan-Feb 1993: Good News for Men.
107. Mar-Apr 1993: Women and Dress.
108. May-Jun 1993: Women in Church Colleges.
109. Jul-Aug 1993: 20th Anniversary Issue

### Women in Ministry

- **Martha Lockwood**, youth pastor at Lancaster (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church, was recently ordained.
- **Janet Peifer** has been ordained at Refton (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church.
- **Kathleen Leadley** was ordained at Orchard Creek Fellowship (Brethren in Christ) in St. Catharines, Ont. She has served as associate pastor and was recently called as senior pastor.
- **Julianna and Philip Bender** have begun serving as pastoral team at Zurich (Ont.) Mennonite Church.



Join the CWC 20th Anniversary Celebration! We invite *Report* readers to plan local celebrations of CWC's 20 years during September 1993. The CWC has compiled a list of 20+ suggestions for activities you can plan in your community. Many suggestions are easy to plan and flexible. Please call or write Women's Concerns for the "20th anniversary flier" of celebration ideas.

## News and Verbs

- MCC Women's Concerns invites your suggestions for workshops and special interest caucuses to schedule during the "**Mennonite Voices in Dialogue: Women Doing Theology**" conference, to be June 23-25, 1994, in Bluffton, Ohio.
- The **fourth provincial MCC Women's Concerns Committee** has been established in Manitoba. This chapter joins similar groups in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.
- Ursula Green of Monrovia, Calif., has been appointed to the **Hesston (Kan.) College Board of Overseers**. She is a teacher and writer, and is president of the Southwest Conference WMSC.
- "Celebrating the possibilities for healing" will be the theme of a retreat for Mennonite and Brethren in Christ **women survivors of abuse**, at Five Oaks Center, Paris, Ont., Sept. 17-19. Contact Esther Epp-Tiessen, MCC Ontario; 519-745-8458.

- Ruth Krall, Goshen (Ind.) College director of Peace Studies, has received a grant from Lily Endowment to help launch a **new class on homelessness**, "Doing Theology in a Situation of Economic Limits: A Christian Response to Homelessness in the U.S." The class will begin in the winter 1994 term.
- Nancy Chupp of Goshen, Ind., is new director of the Washington Office of **Church Women United**, a U.S. group that organizes Christian women for prayer, advocacy and service. A primary duty of the Washington office is monitoring federal legislation, particularly health care and poverty issues.
- Jalane D. Schmidt, staff person at MCC's Washington Office, has been awarded the **Benjamin Mays Scholarship in Ministry** by the Fund for Theological Education. She has been admitted to the Harvard Divinity School's M.Div. program and plans to enroll in the fall of 1993.



Illustrations in this issue were drawn by Teresa Pankratz of Chicago. Please do not reproduce without permission.

- **Spring of Hope**, a newsletter published by the MCC-sponsored Network of Adult Survivors of Abuse, is published four times yearly. It is designed for support of members and education of the wider church. For a sample copy write to: Spring of Hope, Box 69, Akron, PA 17501.
- **Perspectives on Social Issues**, a 13-week adult study book by Harriet Sider Bicksler of Grantham, Pa., has been published by Evangel Press.
- Judy Mullet, assistant professor of education at Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va., and Paula J. Synder, education student, have teamed up to write *A Drama of Love*, a Christian **educator's guide to integrating students** who are physically challenged or have communications or intellectual disabilities. For information contact Developmental Disabilities, MCC, Box 500, Akron, PA 17501.
- Emily Will, MCC writer, received a **first-place award** in the Pa. chapter of Women in Communications annual competition, for two articles portraying an MCC U.S. project featuring prisoners serving life sentences at Pennsylvania's Graterford Prison. Will is former editor of *Women's Concerns Report*.
- Laura Fultz of Clovis, Calif., is the first Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (**VORP director trainee**) in a program to provide directors for new programs. She will spend a year in the Fresno, Calif., Mennonite Voluntary Service unit before launching a new VORP in Madera, Calif.

WOMEN'S CONCERN REPORT is published bimonthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committee strives to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures in which men and women can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in REPORT do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committee on Women's Concerns.

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